now took place in the dance. A long line of men   and women advanced to the fire between the ranks   of   the dancers. Each of them held one end of a hammock   in which lay a new-born infant, whose squalls could be   heard. These babes were now to be presented by their parents   to the moon. On reaching the end of the line each   couple swung the hammock, accompanying the movement   by   a chant, which all the Indians sang in chorus. The   song seemed to consist of three words, repeated over   and   over again. Soon a shrill voice was heard, and a hideous   old hag, like a skeleton, appeared with her arms raised   above her head. She went round and round the assembly   several times, then disappeared in silence. While she was   present, the scarlet dancer with the rattle bounded about   more furiously than ever, stopping only for a moment while   he passed in front of the line of women. His body was   con-tracted and bent towards them, and described an undulatory movement like that of a worm writhing. He shook   his rattle violently, as if he would fain kindle in the women   the fire which burned in himself. Then rising abruptly he   would resume his wild career. During this time the loud   voice of an orator was heard from the village repeating   a   curious name without cessation. Then the speaker approached slowly, carrying on his back some gorgeous bunches   of brilliant feathers and under his arm a stone axe.   Behind him walked a young woman bearing an infant in   a   loose girdle at her waist ; the child was wrapped in a mat,   which protected it against the chill night air. The

couple paced slowly for a minute or two, and then vanished without speaking a word. At the same moment the curious name which the orator had shouted was taken up by the whole assembly and repeated by them again and again. This scene in its turn lasted a long time, but ceased suddenly with the setting of the moon. The French traveller who witnessed it fell asleep, and when he awoke all was calm once more : there was nothing to recall the infernal dances of the night.[1]

In explanation of these dances Casteinau merely observes

[1] F. de Casteinau, *Expedition dans les parties centrahs de VAm^-ique du Snd* (Paris, 1850-1851), ii. 31-34.